

[Was Born an Idea]

Customs & Beliefs — Folkstuff

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Remarks Form C with text Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff 16

FOLKLORE

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NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ———- Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th Street 152 W. 13th Street

DATE March 4, 1939

SUBJECT WAS BORN AN IDEA

1. Date and time of interview April 3, 1939
2. Place of interview Furriers Union 250 W. 26th Street New York City
3. Name and address of informant Mrs. Sarah Cohen
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. Miss Spiro, Educational Director
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

Sam Schwartz

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

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NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Terry Roth ———— Sam Schwartz

ADDRESS 47 W. 69th Street 152 W. 13th Street

DATE March 4, 1939

SUBJECT WAS BORN AN IDEA WAS BORN AN IDEA

In the 1926 strike I was between the workers in Webster Hall. You know, the workers with the cards. I don't have to tell you about cards. All over they played cards in Webster Hall. The hall keeper, he come over and told them. "Please, workers, don't play because I am not allowed for you to play."

He came over again. When he came over the third time he took one of them by the collar and sat him on the floor. I thought he'd kill him. But I can't blame the worker. When he sits and plays cards he forgets his troubles. And that time, in my mind, was born an idea between the workers. And the next day I brought in the striking halls my own set chess and I start to play with my comrades. The most of the workers didn't know even what it is. So one passed by, a leader. Because he is one, he is more important than 1,000 of us. He saw it was crowded around me and one of the boys, he played with me. So they all asked. "What's the matter?" "Oh," that leader says, "she's a crazy. Let her. Don't mind her." I really looked crazy. I was really dressed very shabby, with rags. I took it like a sport. Because I play an important role in the union?

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Then we started to play in the union maybe once a month. I saw that it was very interesting for the workers. It had a good psychological effect on the union. I came over to the educational department. It was in the lockout week, the first week in January last year. But before I came to the education committee, I went to the Public Library. I saw in the Red Encyclopedia, because the Red Russian Encyclopedia is more words than the British, what it means chess, and what the Russian leaders say about chess.

I told them. "Comrades. I think it's time we should have, for the furriers chess. Here I see not only cards, but that they are playing dice. It's poison for the union. Right here on the floor." I told them. "Even dice." So it was one comrade, he is a right one. "Cards?" In the Union? No I don't think they are playing cards in the union."

"Alright. So no cards. But I think there should be chess." So they gave me money, ten dollars to buy two sets and I buy ten.